

Workforce Investment Act
Technical Assistance Guide

Internship

Internship **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDE**

I. INTERNSHIP

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1. Purpose of Internship

Internship is a short-term or part-time work assignment with a private for-profit, non-profit, or public employer designed to enhance skills learned in a classroom setting and provide the opportunity for the application of these learned skills. A successful Internship will better prepare the participant for employment in the related occupation or industry by providing a hands-on introduction to the occupation or industry of interest. Internship will occur prior to, concurrent with or subsequent to 1) occupational classroom training, facilitating the integration of learned vocational skills and theory with the world of work, or 2) basic skills training, aiding the participant in applying the basic skills necessary to compete successfully in the labor market. (Note: the occupational/basic skills training may have occurred/be occurring outside of WIA.) Generally, participation in an Internship should not exceed 250 hours, with the specific duration based upon the needs of the participant. The Internship activity is typically designed for individuals who already possess basic work maturity skills, though this may not be the case for all Internship participants.

Note: Individuals participating in Internship programs sponsored by educational institutions should not be enrolled in WIA's Internship activity. Such individuals will remain in WIA's Occupational Training activity since the institution's internship is a part of the occupational training's curriculum with its own requirements regarding payments and/or class credits.

However, WIA Internships may be developed to benefit a student when it is not feasible or practical for the training institution to do so. For example, if an educational institution requires participation in an Internship (as part of the course curriculum) but does not develop specific opportunities for students, WIA funds may be used to assist the participant in developing such an opportunity.

A. Duration

Generally, participation in an Internship should not exceed 250 hours unless the case manager documents the rationale for extending the Internship or placing the participant at a different training site. Specific hours must be determined as part of the development of the job description and Internship Learning Plan (WIA-40), and will be based on the participant's previous training or work experience, the participant's needs to be met by participation in the Internship, as well as the supervisor's insight regarding exposure to specific tasks.

The planned duration of the Internship should be based on the individual needs of the participant and the ability of the employer to participate in the process of meeting those needs, within the limitations specified in the paragraph above. The completed Internship Learning Plan will list the employer's estimate of time needed to achieve the objectives listed in the learning plan, and should be negotiated by the case manager if he or she considers the duration unreasonably long or short.

Note: Participants in WIA Internships are not allowed to incur overtime.

Note: When a WIA Internship is being utilized to serve a youth under age 18, child labor laws must be observed. The state of Idaho follows the federal child regulations. Please refer to www.youthrules.gov for a complete guide of federal, child labor laws.

B. Payments

All participants in this activity receive an hourly wage equivalent to the federal minimum wage, or higher depending on the participant's prior training/work experience, and the hourly wage offered at the worksite to individuals with comparable training/work experience. Internship participants are employed by the WIA service provider and are provided with FICA and Worker's Compensation coverage. Payment to the participant can only be made for time actually spent in the activity or authorized state and national holidays. Authorized holidays are allowed if the employing agency provides holiday pay to similarly situated, temporary employees. No vacation or sick leave is provided.

2. Participant Considerations

The appropriateness of an Internship for a participant should be documented in the participant's Employment Plan (WIA-130) or case notes, and should show a clear linkage between the Internship and potential improvement in the participant's employability in a specific occupation and/or industry.

Internship can be an excellent "step up" for the participant by providing exposure to the unique aspects of a specific vocation while also attaining actual work experience and employer references related to the participant's career goal.

As a rule, Internship is intended for participants who are new entrants into the labor force. Those transitioning from school to work may also benefit from this activity. Internship, in and of itself, would not normally be the most appropriate choice for an experienced worker desiring immediate entry into the work force, or for whom skill training or work maturity is necessary, unless the activity included occupational classroom training.

3. Worksite Selection

The case manager must be especially careful to match the participant with the employer when selecting and screening potential Internship work sites. Factors such as location, transportation, general employment conditions, type of work, the participant's demonstrated aptitude/interest in the work offered, and availability of supervisory staff committed to a successful experience for the participant are essential considerations for the case manager.

Repeated use of a single worksite may provide the employer with a real or perceived advantage over local competitors, and result in negative publicity for the service provider organization. In making worksite selection decisions, the case manager must

base the decision on the value-added contributions an employer is willing to provide the participant. Such contributions may be in the form of educational activities, on-site contextual learning, or other enhancements to the participant's learning experience. Regardless of the actual selection mechanism utilized, the case manager must take care to document the criteria used for selection/non-selection of the site.

4. Employer Requirements

One role of the case manager in identifying potential Internship sites is to ensure that the employer of the Internship worksite is fully aware of their responsibilities, and to provide them with an understanding of the purpose and goals of the Internship activity.

Although the Internship Operational Guidelines (WIA-51-A) provide basic information, the case manager should review this information with the employer. The case manager should also provide forms and instructions pertaining to recordkeeping, participant hours and submission of the WIA-50 Weekly Time Report before the Internship begins.

The employer should be made aware that Internship is a supervised activity and that all employer staff members who may be responsible for participant supervision and guidance must be knowledgeable of the WIA Internship program's requirements.

As a rule, the elements of the job description should reflect participant exposure to basic employer requirements (i.e. those attitudes and aptitudes the employer would expect unsubsidized, entry-level employees to display). Depending upon the needs of the participant, such elements may include the types of basic workplace knowledge identified in the employer's job description, or may describe attainment of knowledge or skills in occupational areas such as the function of certain machines or processes used by the employer. For participants who are concurrently involved in occupational classroom training, the case manager must ensure that the learning plan complements the classroom curriculum.

5. Participant Supervision and Feedback

For a positive Internship experience, communication between the case manager, the supervisor and participant is essential. Regularly scheduled contact with the supervisor and participant will ensure timely feedback to the participant regarding progress towards attainment of skill goals. Ongoing communication among all parties increases the likelihood of a positive experience for the participant and the employer as well as timely resolution of any issues.

6. Internship Supportive Services

Case managers may provide supportive services to enable a participant who cannot afford to pay for such services to participate in the program. The need for supportive services must be documented by the case manager in the participant's employment plan or case notes. The case manager must ensure the participant is unable to obtain supportive

services through other programs that provide such services and that it is necessary to enable them to participate in WIA activities.

The Supportive Service-Insurance Desk Guide provides a complete description of the types of supportive services that may be provided, as well as instructions for their provision.

7. Internship Forms Completion

The following is a list of forms to be completed for each Internship participant. These forms may be accessed in the WIA Management Information System (MIS) under Information; then Forms.

- Internship Memorandum of Agreement (WIA-51)
- Job Description (WIA-40)
- W-4
- INS Form I-9
- WIA Weekly Time Report (WIA-50)

- ✓ Internship Operational Guidelines (WIA-51-A)

Note: The Internship Operational Guidelines is an information publication designed for worksite staff and does not require completion; a copy should be provided to the worksite.